Electronically Enhanced Democracy in Canada

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Introduction

Public interest and confidence in the institutions of representative democracy are in decline in Canada and elsewhere (Newman, 1995; Nevitte, 1996; Ekos, 1998; Pharr and Putnam, 2000). At the same time, Internet use in Canada and around the world is exploding. According to Statistics Canada, 42% of Canadian households had at least one family member who used the Internet regularly from home, work, school or other locations in 1999 (Statistics Canada, 2000). This figure was a sharp increase from 1997, when only 29% were online. Canadians are also using the Internet for more than just recreation. The percentage of Canadians using the Internet for government information, for example, increased by over 50% from 1998 to 1999, with over 40% of Canadian households that regularly use the Internet accessing government information online.

The quality of governments depends mostly on the wisdom of those who put them in office: in a democracy, that would be the electorate. Where the electorate is poorly informed or, worse still, misinformed, the chances of good government are slight.
-- Pierre Joncas, Retired Public Servant

Examples of the Internet being applied to democratic purposes are seen worldwide. Proceedings of the Illinois House of Representatives (http://www.legis.state.il.us) can be viewed online, the Scottish Parliament (www.scottishparliamentlive.com) broadcasts live to the Internet, Canadian political parties used the World Wide Web extensively in the 2000 election campaign, and American websites provided on-going cyber-debates during the 2000 Presidential election. In fact, nearly one-fifth of Americans looked for campaign news online in 2000, up strikingly from 4% in 1996 (Schafer, 2001). Similarly, Canadians swarmed election websites during November 2000, including a record 463,000 unique visitors to Elections Canada's site (Media Metrix, 2000).

Data such as these lead many to conclude that the Internet could have a very significant impact on democracy. Some even suggest that the Internet will be the "salvation" of democracy as we know it - if not lead to a new form of democracy. Political communications expert Tracy Westen, for example, argues that "technology can provide the electorate with the ability to make improved decisions.... To the extent democracy needs saving, the new generation of interactive digital communications technologies have arrived - just in time to help" (1998). Many scholars argue that the Internet will be the vehicle by which the public becomes sufficiently educated and motivated to arrest the slide into citizen disinterest. This study presents an overview of the Canadian and comparative World Wide Web

Democracy is run by the people who show up.
-- Steven Clift, Online Strategist

landscapes and gauges the extent to which websites are living up to claims made about the Internet's role in democracy.

What Might the Internet Do for Democracy?

When the Internet and democracy are mentioned in the same sentence, most commentators immediately speak or write of *e-democracy*. E-democracy has been described as being

> all about participatory democracy as opposed to representative democracy.... Electronic democracy is also about how citizens can interact with each other to use the Internet and other new technologies as organizational tools to reach their goals of aspiring change (Riley, 2001).

The term e-democracy creates the impression that democracy will come from, and be limited to, computers. This image is misleading; whatever democratising work the Internet can be put to will not replace but rather complement the democracy that pre-existed.

A broader term, *electronically enhanced democracy*, defined as "the nurturing of democratic practices through the utilization of new communications technologies, more specifically the internet" (Barber, Mattson, Peterson, 1997), is preferable for at least two reasons. First, as Barber and his colleagues observe, "We do not believe that democracy should happen solely in cyberspace, of course, and therefore use the term 'electronically enhanced democracy' rather than 'electronic democracy'" (1997). Second, focusing on participation "is an unduly narrow, and thereby misleading, normative yardstick," as Harvard political scientist Pippa Norris argues (2000: 5). Indeed, democratic practices within both representative and participatory forms of democracy may be enhanced.

Electronically Enhanced Democracy: "the nurturing of democratic practices through the utilization of new communications technologies, more specifically the Internet."
– Barber, Mattson, Peterson, 1997

Norris labels those who see an important, positive role in democracy for the Internet as "cyberoptimists" (2000: 1). Among the ideas emanating from this school of thought are suggestions that the Internet could contribute to the development of "strong" democracy (Barber, 1999) or to "an explosion of microdemocracy" (Newman, 1999: 124). Other, related, views hold that political use of the Internet will contribute to government accountability, a more informed citizenry, improved public deliberation, and public participation in decision-making (Hague and Loader, 1999:

8). In short, cyberoptimists argue that the Internet can provide information, deliberation, discussion, and feedback. Or, in the words of one author: "The claims of proponents of an Internet revolution in political participation can be sorted into three categories: citizen information, interaction between citizens and government, and policy making" (Davis, 1999: 21). Each of these claims deserves some elaboration.

Citizen Information

The Internet will enhance democracy through its use as a medium for information retrieval. In terms of political information, the Internet promises the availability of more information for the average citizen and more individualized information - content that is dictated by the recipient - to a greater extent than is possible with most other forms of media. Providing citizens with information on politics, policy and government, it is argued, will empower them to play a more active role in civic life. This availability of information will lead to "a revitalized democracy characterized by a more active and informed citizenry" (Corrado and Firestone, 1996: 29). Furthermore, some suggest that the mere availability of information will encourage otherwise disinterested citizens to become more involved in politics.

Citizen-Government Interaction

Citizens having access to useful political information will lead to significantly improved interaction between citizens and government (Rogers, 1986: 237). This interaction may take the form of email, listserves, chatrooms, and other forms of electronic communications in which citizens and public officials - both elected and appointed - dialogue more effectively than has been the case in the past. The interaction may also be in terms of on-line polling or focus-group testing of potential policy positions. Regardless of the specific form of the interaction, cyberoptimists argue the quality and ease of communicating with public officials will be improved through the Internet.

Policymaking

The Internet will enhance democracy by improving the role and influence of common citizens in public policy-making. Former American television network executive Lawrence Grossman predicts, "The potential will exist for individual citizens to tap

The "Promise" of electronically enhanced democracy:

- ***Empowered and active citizens***
- ***Improved government-citizen interaction***
- ***Increased citizen policymaking influence***
- ***Improved communications among citizens***

into government on demand, giving them the capacity to take a direct and active role, by electronic means, in shaping public policies and specific laws" (1995: 149). In a Canadian context, Internet researcher Michael Gurstein argues that new information and communication technologies such as the Internet provide common citizens "with incredible tools to have a voice and to have some, even if indirect, influence on policy and governance in ways which were much more resource consuming (time, money, energy) previously" (2000). In other words, the Internet is seen as providing access to policy-making that was previously unavailable to citizens.

Citizen Dialogue

In addition to the claims identified by Davis, a fourth way that the Internet is envisaged as having potential to improve democracy is by enhancing communication between and among citizens. At least one author argues that electronic bulletin boards, listserves, email, and multi-user domains create new public spaces in which citizens can exchange ideas, debate issues, and mobilize opinion (Rheingold, 1993). In short, the Internet will encourage civic (and civil) exchange.

To summarize, according to cyberoptimists, democratic uses of the Internet will offer citizens information, interaction with government and each other, and enhanced roles in policy-making. An informed, engaged citizenry will be the outcome of electronically enhanced democracy.

Of course, this is far from a unanimous assessment. Political scientist Robert Putnam suggests that Internet communications are an inadequate replacement for traditional, face-to-face contacts in building social networks (Putnam, 2000). Indeed, one author argues that new information and communication technologies "pose formidable obstacles to achieving a more just and humane social order in the digital age" (Wilhelm, 2000: 6), while another believes the Internet to be a threat to democracy (Gutstein, 1999). On a less dramatic note, one study concluded that the Internet will neither revolutionalize politics nor lead to the end of democracy; rather, the Internet will become just another tool for the individuals and groups who currently have influence in politics (Davis, 1999). Additional criticisms include the possibility that socio-economic biases in political participation are unlikely to be significantly diminished because of the Internet (Golding, 2000: 165-84) and that ordinary citizens

The "Threat" of electronically enhanced democracy:

- ***Inadequate in building social networks***
- ***Tool for already powerful groups***
- ***Socioeconomic biases will remain***
- ***Information overload***
- ***Corporate control***

will be overwhelmed by information overload and unable to do anything with the information (Shenk, 1997). On another front is the prediction that the Internet will be controlled by a few dominant corporate actors pushing entertainment programming rather than public interest content (McChesney, 1999: 182-85). In short, a wide spectrum of opinion exists on how the Internet might affect democracy.

But to what extent has the Internet already begun to transform Canadian democracy? Are sufficient Internet resources available to educate and motivate citizens to be engaged in Canadian political debates? How does Canadian electronically enhanced democracy compare to American, British and Australian efforts?

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Methodology

The Internet is comprised of several media, including Usenet, email, and the World Wide Web. To assess democratic efforts across all aspects of the Internet would be a prohibitively large undertaking. Indeed, with the rapidly changing nature of the Internet, the research would be out of date before it was even completed. To ensure a manageable study, this project focused exclusively on the World Wide Web.

As the emphasis of this research was Canadian electronically enhanced democracy websites, an exhaustive search was conducted for Canadian websites that might be relevant to electronic democracy. Similar but more focused efforts were undertaken with respect to American, British and Australian websites so that the Canadian findings could be placed into a comparative context. Initially, the searches sought to cover a mix of websites: those targeting policy-makers (elected officials, political staffs, public servants) as well as sites serving a broader audience (candidates, students, general public).

Notwithstanding the depth and breadth of the search, political party websites were avoided as these sites were considered to be too partisan to be of interest to the project. Other overtly partisan websites, such as those for election campaigns, were likewise ignored. This exclusion criterion was chosen because it is believed that the Internet's democratic potentials – if any exist – can only be achieved through unbiased, unfiltered information and interactivity of a sort not likely to be found on

partisan sites. The initial scan uncovered 219 websites with potential to be related to electronically enhanced democracy.

An initial assessment was made of each visited site's suitability to the project. Of the 219 visited, 35 provided information for the literature review portion of the project, 101 were not related to electronically enhanced democracy, one was overtly partisan and therefore disqualified and 82 showed promise as resources for electronically enhanced democracy (see Appendix 1).

Table 1: Websites Located

Total	Literature review	Not electronically enhanced democracy	Partisan	Potentially electronically enhanced democracy
219	35	101	1	82

From among the 82 websites with potential as electronically enhanced democracy sites, 40 were chosen for content analysis based on reputation, community profile, or referral from other sources. As Table 2 shows, the majority of the comparative websites were American.

Of 219 websites visited, 82 showed promise as resources for electronically enhanced democracy efforts.

Table 2: Websites Reviewed

Total	Canadian	American	British	Australian
40	25	10	4	1

The environmental scan research was completed between October 2000 and January 2001. Any websites not available during this period are therefore not included in this report. As well, readers should be aware that once a website was analysed, it was not revisited to ascertain whether or not any changes occurred with respect to content, presentation, or otherwise.

The World Wide Web Electronically Enhanced Democracy Landscape

Each of the 25 Canadian websites was reviewed to determine its purpose. (Usually the objective of a website is clearly stated; however, in a few instances no mission or comparable statement was found. In these cases, the objectives were inferred by the

content of the site.) As Table 3 shows, the objectives behind the reviewed Canadian websites fall into three broad categories.

Table 3: Canadian Websites Reviewed, According to Objective

General Canadian Information	Politics and Government	Electronically Enhanced Democracy
National Library of Canada's Inventory of Canadian Digital Initiatives	Guide to Canadian Political Science Resources: Federal Institutions and their Structure	policity.com "citizen-centred governance"
National Library of Canada's Canadian Information By Subject	The Institute On Governance (IOG)	PoliticsWatch™ | Canada's Political Portal™
Canadiana The Canadian Resource Page	The Council for Canadian Unity	MyCanada.cc - Canadian Politics - A Political Guide to a Complex Nation
The Canajun Notebook	do-canada	Canadian Political Dossier
	University of Winnipeg Department of Political Science Research Links	Politics Canada - Political Opinion and Forum
	The John Diefenbaker Center for Freedom and Democracy	Democratic Renewal Home Page
	PoliticsOnline Election 2000: Canada	policy.ca A non-partisan resource for analysts, advocates, journalists and citizens
	Public Policy Forum	Fair Vote Canada
	Canadian Policy research Networks, Inc.	Politicx: Your Issues, Your Voice
	Dialogue Canada	U Vote Online
	FindPolitics	

The 25 Canadian websites chosen for analysis fall into three categories according to objective.

Four websites provided general Canadian information. The purposes behind these websites are all similar in that the creators want to provide, for example, links to information about Canada and Canadian information resources on the World Wide Web. The information accessible from or through these websites is broad in scope and covers more than just politics.

Eleven websites focused on politics and government. In these cases, the information accessible through each website pertains to Canadian politics but without any specific

attempt at enhancing democracy. The mandate of the *Council for Canadian Unity*, for example, is to

> conduct research and studies for the purpose of educating and informing all persons generally in Canada in a better understanding of the legal and fiscal structures and the cultural and political nature of Canada, its provinces and its other civic and government bodies; and to promulgate the findings and results of such studies and research through public assemblies, literature and other means of communication throughout the whole of Canada.

Similarly, the *Institute on Governance* seeks to "promote effective governance," although it targets government agencies, international organizations, NGOs and the private sector rather than individual citizens. Other websites in this category, such as the *National Library of Canada's Guide to Canadian Political Science Resources: Federal Institutions and their Structure*, provide links to other websites that are about Canadian government and politics.

Of the 25 Canadian websites reviewed, only ten provide the kind of content that would engender an active, engaged citizenry - in short, are providing electronically enhanced democracy.

Table 3 shows that there is not an overabundance of websites related to electronically enhanced democracy in Canada. Indeed, of the 25 reviewed, only ten websites provide the kind of content that would engender an active, engaged citizenry - in short, are providing electronically enhanced democracy. These sites seek to get Canadians involved in governing and government. The objective of *policity* is most clearly along these lines as its mission is to "illuminate and support the processes by which citizens can be engaged in issues of community concern, and in the formulation and implementation of public policy." A number of these websites share similar objectives. For example, the missions of *MyCanada.cc*, *The Canadian Political Dossier*, *Politics Canada*, *policy.ca* and *Politicx* are all related to allowing Canadians to learn about and to discuss or debate issues, personalities, policy, and politics. In short, among this group of websites the specifics often differ but the larger objectives are generally the same. The balance of this analysis and discussion focuses on the ten electronically enhanced democracy websites and excludes the other Canadian websites.

Of the 15 comparative websites chosen for review, 12 have objectives related to electronically enhanced democracy (see Table 4). This group includes what its creators claim to be "the world's first election-oriented web site," *Minnesota E-Democracy*. Established in 1994, *Minnesota E-Democracy* continues to provide

election-year information to Minnesota voters; however, its primary focus is "the use of the Internet to improve citizen participation and real world governance." Similar mandates are seen on the websites of organizations such as the *California Voter Foundation*, *Three Line Whip*, and *Oz Protest*. *CalVoter* is "applying new technologies to provide the public with access to the information needed to participate in public life in a meaningful way," the aim of *Three Line Whip* "is to break down the barriers that separate you the voter from your elected politicians," and the aim of *Oz Protest* "is to give you a voice on important public issues and other topics." The other sites in this category share similar objectives: enhancing the public's ability to participate in politics and government through information and interactivity.

Table 4: Comparative Websites Reviewed, According to Objective

Electronically Enhanced Democracy	Other Information
Minnesota E-Democracy	Publicus.Net - Public Strategies for the Online World
The Democracy Online Project	PoliticsOnline: Fundraising & Internet Tools for Politics
California Voter Foundation	Grassroots.com
politicalaccess.com	
opensecrets.org: Your guide to the money in American elections	
DemocracyNet: The Democracy Network	
Project Vote Smart	
Oz Protest	
British Politics Pages	
Thinking Politica for Politics Sociology and Philosophy	
Scottish Politics Pages	
Threelinewhip.com - UK Politics.	

Out of 15 comparative websites reviewed, 12 are involved in electronically enhanced democracy.

The three remaining websites were judged as having objectives other than electronically enhanced democracy and, as such, are classified as Other Information. The *Publicus.Net* website of Internet consultant Steven Clift is designed, in the first instance, to provide information to individuals and groups wanting to use the Internet for democracy, governance, and community and in the second instance to promote Mr. Clift's consulting practice. As a result, the website does not seek to be directly involved in electronically enhanced democracy. The website of *PoliticsOnline* is aimed at professional political operatives and, as such, does not seek to directly contribute to an engaged, informed citizenry. By the same token, *Grassroots.com* is a

commercial venture intending to market its communication products. For these reasons, these three websites are excluded from the analysis and discussion which follows.

What elements of electronically enhanced democracy are presently available?

Electronically enhanced democracy resources seek to inform and involve citizens who then act as an electoral check and/or source of input for public officials. The websites involved in electronically enhanced democracy were analysed to determine the extent to which each site contained the type of content and features expected of such a resource. Based on the assertions of the cyberoptimists and the findings of previous studies (Barber, Mattson and Peterson, 1997; Walt Whitman Center, 1999), the kinds of content expected of a good electronically enhanced democracy website include:

Electronically enhanced democracy resources seek to inform and involve citizens who then act as an electoral check and/or source of input for public officials.

Citizen Information

- Information and/or news on politics and government
- Relevant materials on a wide range of policy issues, including information from a variety of reputable viewpoints
- Electronic newsletter, by free subscription, to keep citizens informed
- Links to external relevant external sources and resources

Citizen-Government Interaction and Citizen Dialogue

- Contact information (address, email address, phone and fax numbers) for elected officials
- Direct electronic contact with elected officials via email
- Discussion forums such as chatrooms, listserves, and web-based forums
- Contact information for, or links to, groups involved in issues of concern. This information would be customized for each visitor's community through, for example, postal code referencing

Policymaking

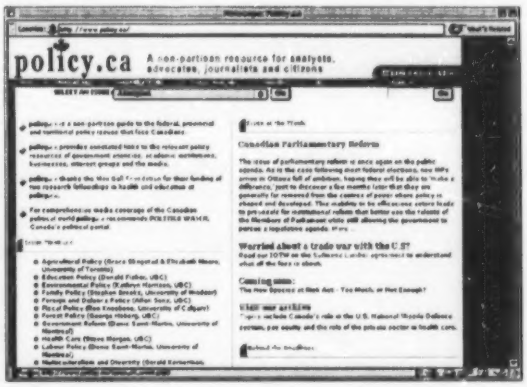
- Online polling
- Online petitions
- Moderated discussion forums and/or "electronic town meetings" with elected officials as participants
- Focus groups, citizen juries, electronic civic consultation, and/or other forms of participant decision-making

Table 5: Content on Canadian Electronically Enhanced Democracy Websites

	Citizen Information				Citizen-Government Interaction and Citizen Dialogue				Policymaking			
	Info or News	Issue Info	Newsletter	Links	Contact Info	Direct Contact	Forums	Groups Info	Online Polling	Online Petitions	Discussions with Officials	Participant Decision-Making
policity.com	✓	*	✓	✓								
PoliticsWatch™	✓		✓	✓								
MyCanada.cc	✓			✓	✓	✓	✓					
Canadian Political Dossier	✓	*					✓					
Politics Canada		*		✓			✓		✓			
Democratic Renewal					✓	✓						
policy.ca	✓	✓		✓			✓					
Fair Vote Canada	✓	*	✓	✓			✓					
Politicx	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓		✓		✓			
U Vote Online	✓	*		✓					✓			
Total	**8**	**2**	**4**	**8**	**3**	**2**	**6**		**3**			

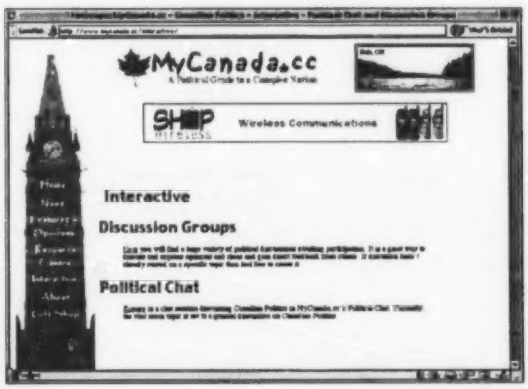
* Narrow range of issues.

The research finds that the reviewed Canadian electronically enhanced democracy websites are woefully lacking. A significant number of expected features are not found on the Canadian electronically enhanced democracy landscape (see Table 5). In the first instance, most of the websites reviewed do not offer the kind of content that would contribute to an informed citizenry. While 8 of 10 include information on politics and government, only two sites provide materials on a broad range of policy issues. Fewer than one-half offer electronic newsletters and even the most basic of Web content – links to external resources – are not on all the sites.


policy.ca
A non-partisan resource for analysts, advocates, journalists and citizens
Canadian Parliamentary Reform
Worried about a trade war with the U.S?

The policy.ca website is exceptional in that it provides information on a wide range of issues.

The websites are also not contributing to an involved citizenry in an overwhelming fashion. Only six sites offer the opportunity for citizens to discuss and debate politics. Fewer than one-third provide the minimum means by which citizens can communicate with their elected officials through contact information; even fewer offer direct email links. No sites included localized information that would encourage citizen engagement in issues of concern.



MyCanada.cc offers interactivity through discussion forums, chat rooms, and contact information for selected elected officials.

Enhancing participation in policymaking is the area in which the Canadian websites fail most miserably to deliver on the promises made by cyberoptimists. Whereas cyberoptimists state that the Internet will provide a previously unknown degree of influence in policy-making for common citizens, the reviewed Canadian websites fall well short of this goal. None of the sites offered online petitions, participation by

elected officials, or participant decision-making. Only the barest of influence could be exerted through any of these sites via online polling – and only on 3 of 10 sites at that.

Although not a column in Table 5, bilingual content should be of some importance to Canadian electronically enhanced democracy sites. However, of the ten, only *Democratic Renewal* included text in both English and French.

Table 6 reviews the technical features found on the Canadian electronically enhanced democracy landscape. Desired features are again drawn from the cyberoptimists and the Whitman Center studies:

- Frames-based browsing that provides the opportunity for visitors to access information in one frame and engage in debate and discussion - at the same time - in another
- In-site search engine so visitors can easily find desired content
- Use of multimedia applications where possible
- Site feedback via email so visitors can offer input into content and features
- Text-only option for visitors with low bandwidth or non-graphical browsers

Based on assertions by the cyberoptimists and previous studies, certain technical features are expected of an electronically enhanced democracy website.

Table 6: Technical Features on Canadian Electronically Enhanced Democracy Websites

	Frames	Search Engine	Multimedia	Feedback	Text-only
policity.com		✓		✓	
PoliticsWatch™		✓		✓	
MyCanada.cc		✓		✓	
Canadian Political Dossier				✓	
Politics Canada				✓	
Democratic Renewal				✓	
policy.ca		✓		✓	
Fair Vote Canada				✓	
Politicx		✓		✓	
U Vote Online		✓		✓	
Total		**6**		**10**	

The research found that some expected features are not found on the Canadian electronically enhanced democracy websites (see Table 6). Search engines appear on a majority of the sites and all allowed visitors to offer feedback. However, none of the reviewed websites featured multimedia applications. Multi-media shortcomings are of concern as they may detract from the ability of the websites to deliver usable content. Visitors are unable, for example, to listen to speeches or view televised or videotaped events while at these sites. As well, none of the sites had the capability of allowing visitors to engage in discussion forums while simultaneously reviewing information pertaining to the issue at-hand.

A website that will enhance democracy must be accessible to as many citizens as possible.

That said, the fact that none offer a text-only version is more important. A website that will enhance democracy must be accessible to as many citizens as possible. By requiring graphical browsers, websites preclude visits from Canadians having low-bandwidth Internet connections or text-based browsers.

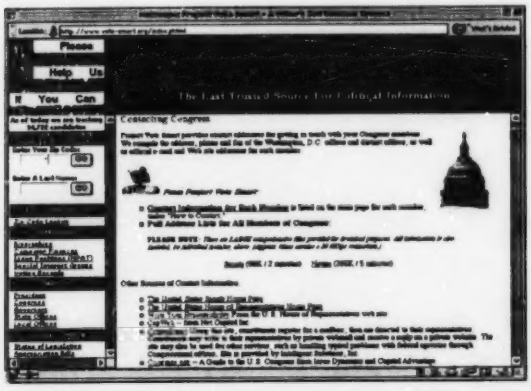
In short, Canadian electronically enhanced democracy efforts are falling far short of the promises made on their behalf. Citizens must check different websites to obtain background information on Canadian politics and government, to learn about policy issues, to engage in a discussion of those issues, and to contact public officials to have them take action on the issues. This shortcoming may lead citizens to lose interest in participating as they will find the effort to be excessive. As a result, democracy will not be enhanced.

In contrast to the Canadian landscape, American, British and Australian websites largely offer the kind of content expected of an electronically enhanced democracy website (see Table 7). The information needs of citizens are being met as a majority of the 12 sites offer information on issues and almost all offer information on

CalVoter's California Online Voter Guide "features reliable, noncommercial information on California propositions and candidates."

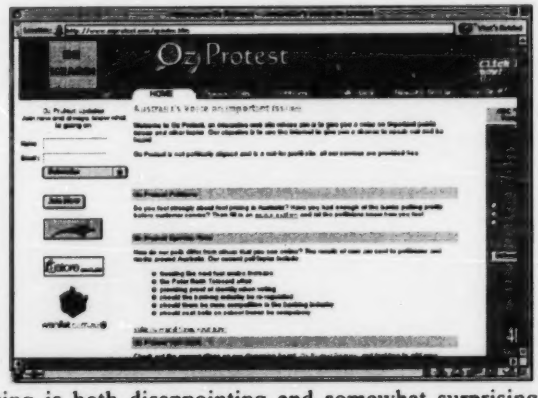
politics and government. Two-thirds of the sites provide e-newsletters and all offer links to external resources.

Interactivity is also more common among this group. The same seven sites provide both contact information and direct email contact to elected officials while six offer the opportunity for one-to-many interaction through discussion forums. However, as with the Canadian sites, no site provides customized contact information for groups involved in issues of concern to the visitor.



Project Vote Smart compiles address, phone, fax, official e-mail and website addresses for each member of Congress.

A minimal degree of influence in policymaking is possible through some of the sites as three feature online polling and one of the three offers online petitions. On the other hand, none of the sites guarantee the opportunity for discussions with elected officials and none include participant decision-making. The minimal enhancement to the citizen's role in policymaking is both disappointing and somewhat surprising given the expectations created by the cyberoptimists.



Oz Protest attempts to encourage an active citizenry through online polling and online petitions.

Table 7: Content on Comparative Electronically Enhanced Democracy Websites

	Citizen Information				Citizen-Government Interaction and Citizen Dialogue				Policymaking			
	Info or News	Issue Info	Newsletter	Links	Contact Info	Direct Contact	Forums	Groups Info	Online Polling	Online Petitions	Discussions with Officials	Participant Decision-Making
Minnesota E-Democracy	✓		✓	✓	✓	✓	✓					
Democracy Online Project	✓		✓	✓								
CalVoter	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓						
politicalaccess.com				✓	✓	✓						
opensecrets.org	✓	*	✓	✓								
DempcracyNet	✓	✓		✓	✓	✓						
Project Vote Smart	✓	✓		✓	✓	✓						
Oz Protest			✓	✓	✓	✓	✓		✓	✓		
British Politics Pages	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓		✓			
Thinking Politica	✓	✓	✓	✓			✓					
Scottish Politics Pages	✓	✓	✓	✓			✓					
Threelinewhip.com	✓	✓	✓	✓			✓		✓			
Total	**10**	**7**	**9**	**12**	**7**	**7**	**6**		**3**	**1**		

* Narrow range of issues.

Technical features found on the comparative electronically enhanced democracy landscape are shown in Table 8. Although some comparative sites were more technologically advanced than were the Canadian examples, shortcomings still exist. None of the comparative websites included frames-based discussion forums or text-only versions. While all allowed user feedback, fewer than one-half had in-site search engines and only one-quarter used multimedia. In short, the non-Canadian websites are not using the technical features of the World Wide Web to the fullest extent possible.

Table 8: Technical Features on Comparative Electronically Enhanced Democracy Websites

	Frames	Search Engine	Multimedia	Feedback	Text-only
Minnesota E-Democracy			✓	✓	
Democracy Online Project			✓	✓	
CalVoter				✓	
politicalaccess.com		✓		✓	
opensecrets.org		✓		✓	
DemocracyNet				✓	
Project Vote Smart				✓	
Oz Protest				✓	
British Politics Pages		✓		✓	
Thinking Politica		✓		✓	
Scottish Politics Pages		✓		✓	
Threelinewhip.com			✓	✓	
Total		**5**	**3**	**12**	

Technical features of the World Wide Web are not being used to the fullest extent possible.

Who is involved in electronically enhanced democracy efforts?

It was expected that most - if not all - of the agencies operating democracy-enhancing websites would be not-for-profits. This was not the case. On the contrary, a plurality of the Canadian electronically enhanced democracy resources reviewed for this project

were commercial ventures. Of the ten sites, five were owned by individuals or corporations acting as commercial entities, three websites were operated by grassroots individuals or groups, one was operated by a non-governmental organization, and one website was the creation of academics. These findings suggest that democratic ideals may have taken a back seat to other motives in the establishment of democracy-enhancing websites in Canada.

Table 9: Canadian Electronically Enhanced Democracy Websites by Organization Type

	Academic	NGO	Grassroots	Commercial
policity.com		✓		
PoliticsWatch™				✓
MyCanada.cc				✓
Canadian Political Dossier				✓
Politics Canada				✓
Democratic Renewal			✓	
policy.ca	✓			
Fair Vote Canada			✓	
Politicx				✓
U Vote Online			✓	
Total	**1**	**1**	**3**	**5**

With respect to comparative websites, the distribution of ownership is more as expected (see Table 10). A majority of websites are operated by not-for-profit agencies. One-third of the 12 sites are run by non-governmental organizations, another third by grassroots individuals and small groups, and one site was operated by an academic organization. Three websites were commercial ventures, only one of which was American. This is somewhat surprising as the popular media have suggested a proliferation of for-profit, "dot-com" sites on the American online politics landscape (Chaudhry, 1999).

One-half of the Canadian electronically enhanced democracy resources were commercial ventures. This suggests that democratic ideals may have taken a back seat to other motives.

Table 10: Comparative Electronically Enhanced Democracy Websites by Organization Type	Academic	NGO	Grassroots	Commercial
Minnesota E-Democracy			✓	
Democracy Online Project	✓			
CalVoter		✓		
politicalaccess.com				✓
opensecrets.org		✓		
DemocracyNet		✓		
Project Vote Smart		✓		
Oz Protest			✓	
British Politics Pages				✓
Thinking Politica			✓	
Scottish Politics Pages			✓	
Threelinewhip.com				✓
Total	**1**	**4**	**4**	**3**

Somewhat surprisingly, none of the reviewed electronically enhanced democracy websites - in Canada, the US, or elsewhere - were operated by government agencies.

Key Findings: Is Electronically Enhanced Democracy a Reality?

The claims made by the cyberoptimists about the promising role for the Internet in improving democracy provide a framework for evaluating the electronically enhanced democracy landscape. If the Internet is living up to its promise, we can expect that democracy-enhancing websites will be successful in delivering on the claims. Turning around the assertions of cyberoptimists, we can therefore ask some basic questions of the reviewed websites. The answers to these questions lead to some very important lessons about electronically enhanced democracy.

The commercial websites aim at raising revenues through banner and other advertising, partnerships with other websites, selling content, subscription fees and electronic retailing. Each site sets its own privacy policy and the sale of information about visitors, although generally frowned upon, is a possibility.

British Politics Pages sells advertising space at the rate of £10,000 ($CDN 22,000) per one million page impressions over twelve months.

Do the websites provide political information to citizens? Of what quality?

The quantity and quality of information related to government, policy, and politics that is available on the World Wide Web - although never optimal - is astounding. Citizens can access information about the history of currency in Canada, how Parliament operates, the biographies of Cabinet ministers, statutes, legislative debates, and more. However, the quality of information found on Canadian sites leaves much to be desired. Although interesting, the information provided will not necessarily empower citizens or encourage them to become more involved in democratic life. On the other hand, information that is more relevant to enhancing civic life is available to British and Australian citizens while even more and better information is available to American web-surfers. Therefore, on this front, Canadian websites are not performing to the standard set by cyberoptimists while the comparative landscape reveals several sites delivering on the promises made.

Do the websites allow for, or encourage, interaction between citizens and government? On what level?

This project found examples of websites providing the means for interaction between citizens and elected officials; however, the quality of interactivity was questionable. Although discussion forums on several sites offered the opportunity for citizens and elected officials to engage in true interaction, no direct evidence of such was found. As a result, the websites reviewed for this project limited interactivity between citizens and elected officials to one-to-one contact, most often through email, with no assurance of response. Indeed, websites providing even this limited form of interactivity were relatively few in number and a critic would observe that email is no more interactive than more traditional forms of communication. Democracy is not being enhanced on this count and the World Wide Web is failing to deliver on this promise.

Do the websites further citizen involvement and influence in public policy-making? How effectively?

Beyond information and limited interactivity, none of the websites offered any means by which citizens could play a *meaningful* role in public policy. Although online

None of the websites offered any means by which citizens could play a meaningful role in public policy.

polling may allow citizens to express policy preferences more readily than previously possible, in the absence of a process through which public opinion expressed at a website is transmitted to decision-makers, the exercise is moot. Additionally, none of the websites provided alternative means, such as electronic civic consultation (Dutch Ministry of the Interior and Kingdom Relations, n.d.), by which citizens could become involved in policy-making. The one potential innovation was an Australian website that promises its online petitions will be forwarded to the appropriate officials, although no evidence exists that online petitions are more influential than traditional petitions. Electronically enhanced democracy websites are falling short on the promise of policy influence.

Do the websites allow for or encourage interaction among citizens?

As was noted above, a number of websites included discussion forums among their features. This is perhaps the most visible means by which a democracy-enhancing website can allow for or encourage virtual interaction among citizens. The one-to-one and one-to-many aspects of discussion forums allow citizens to reach audiences much more easily than through most other media. However, as several studies (e.g., Davis, 1999; Wilhelm, 2000) have shown, the quality of interaction among citizens on discussion forums is questionable. Whether or not any gain comes from the exchanges that take place is an open question. That said, in this case, the Internet is living up to the hype.

The electronically enhanced democracy landscape in Canada (and, to a lesser extent, elsewhere) is disappointing in delivering on the expectations created by cyberoptimists.

To summarize, the electronically enhanced democracy landscape in Canada (and, to a lesser extent, elsewhere) is disappointing in delivering on the expectations created by cyberoptimists. One of the major failings of the reviewed websites is the shortage of true interactivity between citizens and their representatives. The websites reviewed in this study also came far from achieving the policymaking role for citizens that was described by cyberoptimists.

However, the fault is not entirely that of the websites. Part of the problem, no doubt, is in the content and features being offered; part of the problem is in the lack of participation by elected officials; the largest part of the problem, however, is participation by the political system in the new medium. Unless elected officials

choose to participate in electronically enhanced democracy, all websites will fall short of the expectations built for them by cyberoptimists.

The issue ultimately is related to the structure of institutions of representative democracy in Canada and elsewhere. In the case of democracy at the federal and provincial levels in Canada, the Westminster parliamentary system of government, with its features that include centralized powers and strict party discipline, seems an unlikely candidate for the kind of interactivity and participation promised of the Internet. This suggests that in Canadian federal and provincial politics, promises made by the cyberoptimists may be unrealistic.

The Internet cannot be expected to force politicians to change how they work, and the existence of a website does not compel politicians to participate on the site. Therefore, in this regard, the websites in this project were measured against an ideal that at present may be unachievable. None of the resources are government-operated and, because of reticence to participate in what may be perceived as a threatening medium, it may be impossible for non-government websites to guarantee response or participation by elected officials.

Unless elected officials choose to participate in electronically enhanced democracy, all websites will fall short of the expectations built for them by cyberoptimists.

However, the internet *is* contributing to increased demand by Canadians (and others) for inclusiveness on the part of governments and this demand requires reply. Using the Internet, elected representatives could improve the level of interaction between themselves and their constituents. Participating in chatrooms and discussion forums and using email to inform and respond to constituents would be just a beginning.

Where the perhaps unstoppable force of the Internet meets the often immovable object of institutions is in the area of policymaking. Elected representatives could use the Internet to strengthen their communications with constituents and raise the level of interactivity. However, institutional constraints, such as party discipline and centralized power, limit the role of the MP or MLA – and, by extension, that of the constituent – in policymaking. As a result, given the current institutions of parliamentary government in Canada, electronically enhanced democracy will continue to fall short of expectations as information and interactivity will not necessarily lead to policymaking. Indeed, if Canadians experience frustration in their

efforts to become involved in policymaking via the Internet, then this could actually further erode public confidence and trust in representative democracy.

There is a seeming incompatibility between the logic of Canadian representative democracy and the logic of the Internet. If governments and elected representatives choose to engage electronically enhanced democracy, they will want to do so on their own terms. Governments and politicians will not want to expose themselves to potentially damaging situations and therefore will want to orchestrate their involvement in electronically enhanced democracy. This orchestration could take the form of, for example, choosing to be involved only with a single government or party website. This may go against the logic of the Internet, which seems to thrive on the multitude of websites that now exist on the World Wide Web.

Related to this is the present lack of coordination among websites. While this is not unique to electronically enhanced democracy on the World Wide Web, in this instance the anarchic nature of the Internet may be proving detrimental to achieving the goal of electronically enhancing democracy. While most aspects of a good electronically enhanced democracy website can be found on the Web, no *one* site offers all the content and features. Instead, a number of websites exist (a large percentage on a for-profit basis), each doing a less than ideal job of enhancing democracy, rather than one comprehensive, well-designed and well-produced, site. As a result, citizens have to surf from site-to-site, obtaining information from some, interaction from others, and a minimal role in policymaking from very few.

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These two interrelated problems appear to have a common solution: one site. But who ought to take the lead on this initiative? Of the three sectors in the Canadian economy (private, public and non-profit), which holds the most promise for being able to deliver electronically enhanced democracy? Given the relatively poor performance of the commercial websites reviewed for this project, it seems safe to say that the private sector would not be appropriate. It appears that there may be little opportunity for enhancing democracy while seeking to turn a profit as equality – a keystone of democracy – and efficiency – central to profit maximization – are rarely if ever simultaneous goals. Seeking to maximize profit, website operators may choose to

forego some of the content and features needed to truly electronically enhance democracy.

The public sector also seems an unlikely candidate as it has problems, among others, of public trust and credibility. It is doubtful that the declines in public interest and trust being witnessed in recent years would be arrested by a website run by the institution that is the object of what is at best widespread apathy. In fact, accusations of partisanship and non-independence have plagued the British government's recent attempt at e-government (PoliticsOnline, 2001). Further, a recent roundtable of Canadian federal public servants suggested that a third party might be the best option for instituting online discussions (Richard, 2000: 10, 11).

On the other hand, as this project has shown, non-profit organizations are capable of creating and maintaining websites that indeed do electronically enhance democracy. Further, as political scientist Keith Banting has observed, "Nonprofit organizations have a number of features that make them an attractive alternative to market-driven enterprises or state agencies" (2000: 3). As the Canada West Foundation's Alternative Service Delivery project found, among these features are levels of public acceptance far beyond those of the private or public sectors (McFarlane and Roach, 1999a; 1999b). In short, the non-profit sector offers the best avenue for creating and maintaining electronically enhanced democracy resources.

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Therefore, the next step is for elected representatives in Canada to work with members of the non-profit sector in building and contributing to electronically enhanced democracy. This partnership would have to recognize the tension that exists between the politician's need for control and the Internet's inherent disorder and will therefore have to ensure that elected representatives actually participate on the resultant website. This will free politicians from having to choose from among a multitude of sites but it will, in effect, be picking a winner from among the "competition" that is the electronically enhanced democracy landscape. An alternative for elected representatives that would not necessarily result in one website having an advantage over all others would have politicians work with all, or at least many, of the non-profit, non-partisan websites in Canada. However, this seems an unworkable solution as some politicians might choose to work with preferred websites and the resultant

landscape may become partisanized to the point of harming rather than enhancing democracy.

In other regards, the reviewed websites are also falling short of their potential. On the one hand, low bandwidth and non-graphical browsing are not being facilitated as text-only versions are not available. On the other hand, multimedia applications are not being utilized to their potential. In short, the disappointing findings of this project point to the need for elected representatives and the non-profit sector to work together to find a solution that will see electronically enhanced democracy flourish in Canada. Not doing so risks losing a golden opportunity to arrest the present decline in public interest and confidence in the institutions of representative democracy.

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Lessons and Implications

Electronically enhanced democracy can be the linkage between institutions and technology and between citizens and elected representatives. The key findings of this report point to valuable lessons for both those presently engaged in electronically enhanced democracy efforts and for public officials who wish to use the new technologies to improve democracy. One group of lessons is for site administrators and content providers:

- Website content providers need to make available through their sites more information that is useful to citizens and relevant to enhancing democracy.
- Website administrators must make interactivity more available through chatrooms, discussion forums, and by providing the means by which citizens can contact elected representatives and issue-related groups.
- Multimedia and other technical features that will enhance the information, interactivity and policymaking aspects of websites have to be more fully incorporated.
- At the same time, universal access to electronically enhanced democracy must be increased through text-only options on websites.

This study also points to two important lessons for public officials:

- Elected representatives should participate in meaningful ways in the interactive aspects of the Internet, including chatrooms and discussion forums.

- Elected representatives should work with website administrators to enhance citizen participation in policymaking through the Internet.

Finally, this report points to valuable lessons for both those concerned about the health of, and for those interested in using the Internet to improve, Canadian democracy:

- Cooperation among individuals and groups representing a broad spectrum of civil society needs to occur with the goal of achieving an outstanding Canadian electronically enhanced democracy website.
- Elected representatives must actively participate in, and provide support for, the endeavour.
- The non-profit sector needs to be a key participant throughout the electronically enhanced democracy effort and the resultant website should be the product of, and managed by, a non-profit entity.

Conclusion

Although this study shows that at present the World Wide Web is not meeting the expectations created, real potential exists for electronically enhanced democracy in Canada and elsewhere.

Local government may prove to be the cradle of electronically enhanced democracy in Canada.

In fact, electronically enhanced democracy may be possible in Canada – notwithstanding the institutions of representative democracy at the federal and provincial levels. Local governments in Canada, because of their council forms of government, do not have the kinds of institutional constraints that inhibit the nurturing of electronically enhanced democracy. Briefly, in contrast to the parliamentary systems seen in Canada, local governments have neither strong party discipline (if any) nor centralized power in the office of mayor. This lack of constraints allows municipal councillors to be more open and interactive with constituents and may provide the opportunity for enhanced roles for the public in policymaking. Moreover, a Canada West study finds that over 10% of western Canadian municipalities with websites plan to have, within two years, online consultations (Downey, 2001). Local government may prove to be the cradle of electronically enhanced democracy in Canada.

The constraints to electronically enhancing Canadian parliamentary democracy and the possibility of electronically enhanced democracy at the local level in Canada point the way for future research. Questions to be addressed in the future include: Are public trust and confidence at the federal and provincial levels continuing to decline? Is this in spite of, because of, or irrespective of attempts at electronically enhanced democracy? Does electronically enhanced democracy exist at the local level in Canada? If so, is it contributing to any improvement in social capital? All of these questions deserve attention.

Future research questions include:

- ***Are public trust and confidence at the federal and provincial levels continuing to decline? Is this in spite of, because of, or irrespective of attempts at electronically enhanced democracy?***
- ***Does electronically enhanced democracy exist at the local level in Canada? If so, is it contributing to any improvement in social capital?***

Postscript

The rapidly changing nature of the Internet renders almost any research somewhat outdated even before it is published. In fact, a number of websites dealing with American politics ceased to exist or refocused their efforts shortly after the presidential election. This is also the case with the current report. Some websites included in this report had already disappeared from the landscape between the time of the research and the publication date. On the other hand, new sites emerged and others, such as the re-launched Government of Canada website (www.canada.gc.ca), dramatically enhanced their content and features such that the level of information, interactivity and influence for Canadians may be improving.

Appendix 1: Websites Located

Websites Reviewed

1 Canadian

A New Democracy For Canada! (http://www.democraticrenewal.com/)

Canadian Policy Research Networks Inc. (http://www.cprn.ca/)

Canadian Political Dossier (http://www.politicx.com/dossier/)

Canadiana -- The Canadian Resource Page
(http://www.cs.cmu.edu/Unofficial/Canadiana/README.html)

Council for Canadian Unity (http://www.ccu-cuc.ca)

Dialogue Canada (http://www.uni.ca/dialoguecanada/)

eGroups : do-canada (http://www.egroups.com/group/do-canada)

Fair Vote Canada - Home (http://www.fairvotecanada.org/)

FindPolitics.com (http://www.FindPolitics.com/)

Guide to Canadian Political Science Resources: Federal Institutions and their Structure
(http://www.nlc-bnc.ca/services/escience.htm)

MyCanada.cc - Canadian Politics - A Political Guide to a Complex Nation
(http://www.mycanada.cc/)

National Library of Canada's Canadian Information By Subject: Political science
(http://www.nlc-bnc.ca/caninfo/ep032.htm#32)

National Library of Canada's Inventory of Canadian Digital Initiatives
(http://www.nlc-bnc.ca/ehome.htm)

Policity.com (http://www.policity.com/)

Policy.ca (http://www.policy.ca/)

Politics Canada (http://www.canadawebpages.com/politics/)

Politics Watch - Canada's Political Portal (http://www.politicswatch.com)

PoliticsOnline Canadian Election
(http://www.politicsonline.com/pol2000/canadaelections.asp)

Politicx (http://www.politicx.com/)

Public Policy Forum (http://www.ppforum.com)

The Canajun Notebook (http://canada.kos.net/)

The Institute on Governance (IOG) (http://www.iog.ca)

The John Diefenbaker Center for Freedom and Democracy
(http://diefenbaker.freeyellow.com/)

U Vote Online (http://uvoteonline.net/)

UofW Political Science Department: Internet Research
(http://www.uwinnipeg.ca/academic/as/polsci/psearch/psearch.html)

2 American

California Voter Foundation - Home Page (http://www.calvoter.org/)

Center for Responsive Politics (http://www.crp.org/)

Grassroots.com (http://www.grassroots.com)

Minnesota E-Democracy (http://www.e-democracy.org/)

Politicalaccess.com (http://www.politicalaccess.com)

Politicsonline.com (http://www.politicsonline.com)

Project Vote Smart (http://www.vote-smart.org/)

Steven Clift - Public Strategies for the Online World (http://www.publicus.net/)

The Democracy Network (http://www.dnet.org)

The Democracy Online Project (http://democracyonline.org/)

3 British

British Politics (http://www.ukpol.co.uk/)

Scottish Politics Pages (http://www.alba.org.uk/home1.html)

THINKING POLITICA for Politics Sociology and Philosophy
(http://home.freeuk.net/ethos/)

Threelinewhip.com - UK Politics (http://www.threelinewhip.com/homepage.htm)

4 Australian

Oz Protest - Australia's voice on issues (http://www.ozprotest.com/)

Potentially Electronically Enhanced Democracy

Actionize.com for Results (http://www.actionize.com/)

AOL Election2000 (http://election2000.aol.com)

BallotMaker.org (http://www.ballotmaker)

Bettercampaigns.org (http://www.bettercampaigns.org)

Calgary Free-Net: Canadian Government and Public Policys
(http://www.freenet.calgary.ab.ca/canada/occupati/governmt.html)

Campaign Finance Institute Home (http://www.cfinst.org/)

Center for Civic Education (http://www.civiced.org/)

Center for Civil Society International (http://solar.rtd.utk.edu/~ccsi/ccsihome.html

CivicMind (http://www.CivicMind.com)

CIVICUS (http://www.civicus.org/)

Civnet Home Page (http://civnet.org/)

Debate America (http://www.debateamerica.org/)

Decidebetter.com (http://www.decidebetter.com/home/index.asp)

Democracy Watch homepage (http://www.dwatch.ca/)

DemocracyNet (http://www.ned.org/)

Democratic Dialogue (http://www.dem-dial.demon.co.uk/index.htm)

edemocracy - The home of Electronic Democracy
(http://www.democracy.org.uk/home.html)

Electronic politics and democracy
(http://www.qub.ac.uk/mgt/itsoc/sem/edemoc.html)

epolitix (http://www.epolitix.com/)

Freedom Channel -- American Politics on Demand
(http://www.freedomchannel.com/)

Issues2000.org - Candidates on the Issues (http://www.issues2000.org/)

NetElection: The Internet and Campaign 2000 (http://netelection.org/)

PoliticalWag.com - discuss politics and political issues online
(http://www.politicalwag.com/servlet/home)

Politics Canada Home Page (http://politicscanada.com/)

Politics.com (http://www.politics.com/)

Politics1.com (http://www.politics1.com)

PoliticsCanada.com (http://www.PoliticsCanada.com)

presidentmatch.com (http://www.presidentmatch.com)

Selectsmart.com (http://www.selectsmart.com)

SpeakOut.com (http://www.speakout.com/)

Teledemocracy Action News Network Home Page (http://www.auburn.edu/tann/)

The Brisbane Institute: Home Page (http://www.brisinst.org.au/)

The Public Policy Assessment Society Inc. (http://members.optusnet.com.au/~polsoc/)

The Sydney Institute (http://www.sydneyins.org.au/main.html)

Voter.com (http://www.voter.com)

Web White & Blue (http://www.webwhiteblue.org/)

westminsterwatch (http://www.westminsterwatch.co.uk/)

Women Leaders Online and Women Organizing for Change (http://www.wlo.org/)

Women's Electoral Lobby (WEL) Australia (http://www.wel.org.au/index.htm)

YouGov (http://www.yougov.com/index.jsp)

Youthfluence (http://www.youthfluence.com/)

youthvote2000.org (http://www.youthvote2000.org)

Partisan

Rock the Vote (http://www.rockthevote.org/)

Not Electronically Enhanced Democracy

APSA Best Political Science Web Site Nominees
(http://www.jmu.edu/cis/brooksrg/nominees.html)

ARDNOC - Home Page (http://www.canet3.net/)

Australia Institute (http://www.tai.org.au)

Australia United (http://australiaunited.freeservers.com/)

Benton Foundation Home Page (http://www.benton.org/)

British Politics Pages (http://www.club.demon.co.uk/Politics/)

CA*Net.3.News.Mailing.List.Archive: Canada leads world in
(http://www.canarie.ca/MLISTS/testnet2000/0175.html)

Canada by Design (http://www.candesign.utoronto.ca)

Canadian Elections - Home Page (http://www.sfu.ca/~aheard/elections/)

Canadian Politics, Elections and Political Parties
(http://www.library.ubc.ca/poli/cpwebpr.html)

CanadianDebate.com - Choose your debate! (http://canadiandebate.com/menu.html)

CanWIN e-2000 -- Canadian Women's Information Network for Election 2000
(http://ace.acadiau.ca/polisci/aa/digagora/courses/pols1006/canwin/)

Center for Civic Networking (http://www.civicnet.org)

Center for Democracy and Citizenship (CDC) | Hubert H. Humphrey Institute of
Public Affairs (http://www.publicwork.org/)

Centre for Citizenship and Human Rights (http://arts.deakin.edu.au/cchr/)

CITIZENS' INITIATED REFERENDA Homepage
(http://www.ozemail.com.au/~ciraust)

Citizens League Minnesota (http://www.citizensleague.net/)

CivicMind (http://www.CivicMind.com)

CIVICUS (http://www.civicus.org/)

Civnet (http://www.civnet.org)

Community Networks: Bibliography and Resource Guide
(http://php.ucs.indiana.edu/~kgregson/main_menu.html)

CPAC (http://www.cpac.ca/english/)

Creating the Active Citizen? Recent Developments in Civics Education (Research Paper 15 1998-99) (http://www.aph.gov.au/library/pubs/rp/1998-99/99rp15.htm)

Cybersavvy Citizen (http://www.us.net/indc/column2.htm)

Daniel Turp, MP Sites of Interest (http://www.rocler.qc.ca/turp/sites/intro.htm)

Debate of the Age (http://www.age2000.org.uk)

DIALOGUE CANADA (http://www.uni.ca/dialoguecanada/)

Direct Democracy Campaign (http://www.homeusers.prestel.co.uk/rodmell/)

Does your Web site meet its users' needs?
(http://www.gcn.com/state/vol6_no12/com/921-1.html)

Edible Ballot (http://edibleballot.tao.ca)

Election Stock Market (http://esm.ubc.ca/index.html)

EPAA Vol. 8 No. 27 Schmidt et al.: The Challenges to Distance Education
(http://epaa.asu.edu/epaa/v8n27/)

FindPolitics.Com (http://www.findpolitics.com/)

Freedom Works: The Office of the House Majority Leader
(http://freedom.house.gov/)

Friedrich Naumann Stiftung (http://www.fnst.de/bildung/t-heuss/)

Hillwatch.com (http://www.hillwatch.com/homebody.htm)

IAP2 Home Page (http://www.pin.org)

IDEA: Voter Turnout from 1945 to 1998 - A Global Report on Political Participation
(http://www.idea.int/voter_turnout/index.html)

Institute for Citizenship (http://www.citizen.org.uk)

Institute of Welsh Affairs (http://www.iwa.org.uk/)

International Public Management Network
(http://www.willamette.org/ipmn/home/main.html)

Internet Resources for Australian Activists (http://www.green.net.au/activism/)

Internet, Democracy and Public Goods Conference ----I 1° Conferência Eletrônica do CEVEP |-- (http://www.e-democracy.lcc.ufmg.br/e-democracy.nsf/index_ing.html?OpenPage)

Inventory of Canadian Digital Initiatives - Other Sites (http://www.nlc-bnc.ca/initiatives/esites.htm)

James M. Buchanan Center for Political Economy (http://www.gmu.edu/jbc/)

Jefferson Center (http://www.jefferson-center.org/)

Legislative Bills Online (http://www3.legislate.com/legbills.nsf)

Lets Talk Canadian Politics (http://www.mts.net/~ccooke/politics/index.html)

MAI-Not Forum (http://www.flora.org/flora.mai-not/)

Mercatus Center (http://www.mercatus.org)

Netscape Political News Channel (http://dailynews.netscape.com/dailynews/politics/)

Newmedia-forum (http://www.newmedia-forum.net)

PanAm byDesign (http://www.panam-bydesign.net)

phorum - Dev Net - Welcome to DevNet! (http://www.ecommons.net/forum/read.php?f=5&t=4&a=2&l=english&loc=0)

Political Corner - Canada (http://www.politicalresources.net/canada/canada.htm)

Political Resources on the Net (http://www.agora.stm.it/politic/)

Political Resources on the Net - United Kingdom and Northern Ireland (http://www.politicalresources.net/uk.htm)

Political Science Manuscripts (http://www.tcnj.edu/~psm/)

Political Science Resources on the Internet (http://www.nelson.com/nelson/polisci/)

Political Science: A Net Station - Canadian Politics on the Internet (http://www.library.ubc.ca/poli/cpweb.html)

Political Studies Association of the UK (http://www.psa.ac.uk)

Politically Speaking (http://www.yt.sympatico.ca/Contents/Government/pollinks.html)

Politics International (http://www.geocities.com/CapitolHill/Senate/2573/)

Politics Online Conference (http://www.gspm.org/politicsonline/)

PoliticsDirect.com | Politics Direct to Business (http://www.politicsdirect.com/)

Poly-Cy - Internet Resources for Political Science (http://www.polsci.wvu.edu/PolyCy/)

Press For Change (http://www.pfc.org.uk)

PROceedings: Political Research Online (http://PRO.harvard.edu/)

Public Administration and Management: An Interactive Journal-- Homepage (http://www.hbg.psu.edu/Faculty/jxr11/index.html)

Public Agenda Online (http://www.publicagenda.org/)

Public Interests Research and Communications Inc. - pircinc.com (http://pircinc.com/)

PUBLIC POLICY (http://www.manukau.govt.nz/RESOURCE/pubpol.htm)

Public Policy Forum (http://www.ppforum.com/)

Public Sector Continuous Improvement Site by John Hunter (http://deming.eng.clemson.edu/pub/psci/)

Punditmag (http://www.punditmag.com)

Riding-by-riding Canadian Election Forecast (http://www.arts.uwaterloo.ca/~m6chan/)

Scholars' Guide/ 98.40 2-8-98 (http://members.aol.com/dann01/webguide.html)

Social, Civil & (http://www.ulst.ac.uk/faculty/shse/unesco/scpe.htm)

Teaching Politics Techniques & Technologies (http://www.tcnj.edu/~psm/tp/)

The Borque Report (http://www.achilles.net/~pierre/bmw.html)

The Brookings Institution: Main Home Page (http://www.brookings.edu/)

The byDesign - eLab (http://www.bydesign-elab.net/projects)

The Civic Network (http://civic.net)

The Effects of Community Networks on Political Participation: A Resource Guide (http://php.indiana.edu/~kgregson/teledemocracy.html)

The Electronic Commons (http://www.ecommons.net)

The Henry Parkes Foundation (http://www.users.bigpond.com/parkesfoundation/)

The HHH PUBPOL Archives (http://www.hhh.umn.edu/PUBPOL/pubpol.htm)

The Hill Times (http://www.thehilltimes.ca/)

The Honorable Dr David Kemp MP (http://www.curriculum.edu.au/democracy/about/project/kemp.htm)

The Internet: A Selective Bibliography (http://www.nlc-bnc.ca/services/ebib3net.htm#8)

The Learning Resource Network (http://learnet.gc.ca/)

The McLuhan Program (http://www.mcluhan.org)

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